

Text of McNamara's Speech

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all these considerations, we have decided to go forward with this Chinese-oriented A.B.M. deployment, and we will begin actual production of such a system at the end of this year.

fits are no substitute for their I want to emphasize that it contains two possible dangers—and we should guard carefully against each.

The first danger is that we may psychologically lapse into the old over-simplification about the adequacy of nuclear power. The simple truth is that nuclear weapons can serve to deter only a narrow range of threats. This A.B.M. deployment will strengthen our defensive posture—and will enhance the effectiveness of our land-based I.C.B.M. offensive forces. But the independent nations of Asia must realize that these benefits are no substitute for their maintaining and, where necessary, strengthening their own conventional forces in order to deal with more likely threats to the security of the region.

A Mad Momentum

The second danger is also psychological. There is a kind of mad momentum intrinsic to the development of all new nuclear weaponry. If a weapon system works—and works well—there is strong pressure from many directions to produce and deploy the weapon out of all proportion to the prudent level required.

The danger in deploying this relatively light and reliable Chinese-oriented A.B.M. system is going to be that pressures will develop to expand it into a heavy Soviet-oriented A.B.M. system.

We must resist that temptation firmly—not because we can for a moment afford to relax our vigilance against a possible Soviet first-strike—but precisely because our greatest deterrent against such a strike is not a massive, costly, but highly penetrable A.B.M. shield, but rather a fully credible offen-

sive assured destruction capability.

The so-called heavy A.B.M. shield—at the present state of technology—would in effect be no adequate shield at all against a Soviet attack, but rather a strong inducement for the Soviets to vastly increase their own offensive forces. That, as I have pointed out, would make it necessary for us to respond in turn—and so the arms race would rush hopelessly on to no sensible purpose on either side.

Let me emphasize—and I cannot do so too strongly—that our decision to go ahead with limited A.B.M. deployment in no way indicates that we feel an agreement with the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic nuclear offensive and defensive forces is any the less urgent or desirable.

Road From Ax to I.C.B.M.

The road leading from the stone ax to the I.C.B.M.—though it may have been more than a million years in the building—seems to have run in a single direction.

If one is inclined to be cynical, one might conclude that man's history seems to be characterized not so much by consistent periods of peace, occasionally punctuated by warfare; but rather by persistent outbreaks of warfare, wearily put aside from time to time by periods of exhaustion and recovery—that parade under the name of peace.

I do not view man's history with that degree of cynicism, but I do believe that man's wisdom in avoiding war is often surpassed by his folly in promoting it.

However foolish unlimited war may have been in the past, it is now no longer merely foolish, but suicidal as well.

It is said that nothing can

prevent a man from suicide, if he is sufficiently determined to commit it.

The question is what is our determination in an era when unlimited war will mean the death of hundreds of millions—and the possible genetic impairment of a million generations to follow?

Man is clearly a compound of folly and wisdom—and history is clearly a consequence of the admixture of those two contradictory traits.

History has placed our particular lives in an area when the consequences of human folly are waxing more and more catastrophic in the matters of war and peace.

In the end, the root of man's security does not lie in his weaponry.

In the end, the root of man's security lies in his mind.

What the world requires in its 22nd Year of the Atomic Age is not a new race towards armament.

What the world requires in its 22nd Year of the Atomic Age is a new race towards reasonableness.

We had better all run that race.

Not merely we the administrators. But we the people.

